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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage October 9 on Typhoon Krosa, which swept through the island over the weekend; on the military parade on Oct. 10, the first in 16 years; and on DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh's absence from public appearances for the ten days.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said Taiwan should shop elsewhere for its planned purchase of fighter jets. An op-ed in the same newspaper Oct. 8 claimed that recent remarks by U.S. officials opposing Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations suggested that there might be a secret deal between the U.S. and China. End summary.

13. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

A) "The F-16 Isn't the Only Bird in Town"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (10/9):

"As China's military threat is not becoming any less severe, Taipei must find a way to pull itself out from this quandary. The solution is fairly simple- shot elsewhere. Luckily, there is no shortage of companies and states eager to sell weaponry to countries in need.

"There would be other advantages to widening the list of potential defense contractors. For one, increased competition means that prices would likely to down. It would also diminish Taiwan's unhealthy reliance on the U.S. to meet its defense needs, which puts it at risk when, as now, politics have a detrimental impact on defense acquisitions.

"In other words, by shopping around, Taiwan would prompt Beijing to make more belligerent demands with more countries -- perhaps alienating them in the process -- which could prove politically beneficial."

B) "U.S. Choice: Principle or Realpolitik"

Jerome Keating, a Taiwan-based commentator, opined in the "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000](10/8):

"In effect, the unresolved status of the 23 million free and democratic people of Taiwan allows the U.S. to use Taiwan as a pawn, a bargaining chip in its dealings with China. Is this going beyond realpolitik and leading to a betrayal of principles?

"[Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] Christensen indicated that he believes that China has drawn a line in the sand over its interpretation of a spurious symbolic code and names....

"The rhetoric and tone Christensen uses indicate that yet another secret Kissinger-like deal exists between the U.S. and China. This

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bears examination...

"Taiwan is being asked to take responsibility for the hole that the U.S. has dug. China's provocative assertions and claims over the democratic people of Taiwan and its provocative pile of missiles against Taiwan are more harmful to the 'status quo' and the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait than any statements or actions made by Taiwan."

YOUNG